Prayers and Meditations

I

NSOFAR as the activities of the physical organism are ego-centric, it is both legitimate and necessary to separate the consciousness from it and to regard the body as a servant to be directed, guided and made obedient. As the terrestrial being grows more receptive to the divine forces and manifests them in its illumined activities, one can identify oneself with it once more and cease to distinguish between the instrument and the Doer. But since, by the very necessity of preservation, these two modes of activity inevitably coexist, both these points of view, both these ways of feeling must also coexist.

24 July 1914

True impersonality of the nervous being does not consist in an entire and absolute surrender to the Divine Will. This submission is but a preparation. Perfect impersonality — whether in the prana or in the other worlds of being — lies in identification with the terrestrial prana, or rather with the divine bliss deep within all sensations as within all universal activities. The result is that instead of feeling the joy of a sensation, one is this very sensation in all those who enjoy it. Then the individual prana no longer exists; but there is instead a force, at once impersonal and conscious, which manifests in all the organs that are capable of perceiving it.

For example, there is a subtle joy, both sweet and profound, in the sensation one feels while walking alone or with a companion with whom one is in perfect harmony, through seldom trod or virgin tracts of countryside unspoiled by any human atmosphere, where Nature is tranquil, vast, pure like an aspiration, holy like a prayer; on mountains, in forests, along stray paths beside limpid streams, or on the shores of a boundless ocean. So long as the prana remains individual, this joy can
Words of Long Ago

only be experienced when certain outer conditions are fulfilled. On the other hand, when the prana is truly impersonalised, universalised, one becomes this delightful bliss in all those who feel it; one no longer needs, in order to enjoy it, to be surrounded by certain specific material conditions.

With regard to the nervous plane, one is then perfectly free from all circumstances. One has attained liberation.

30 July 1914

I listened to the voice of the waves and it told me of many marvels. It spoke to me of the joy of life and of the ecstasies of movement. O Sea, in a song without end and ever renewed, thou didst tell me again of the power of love which makes all things true. Contemplating the splendour of thy invincible action, I perceived the irresistible surge that carries the universe towards the Supreme Reality. The force that lifts thee and changes thy surface into mountains is like the force that raises the world out of its inertia and awakens in it the aspiration for the Divine.

Then as I watched thee in the silence, thou didst speak to me more deeply still, and thou didst tell me of the great mystery of eternal Love that loves itself in all forms and is self-revealed in all activities. Already in my being this ineffable Love lived self-aware, but at that hour its life took on an exceptional intensity, or perhaps the individual perception was exceptionally clear. O adorable Lord, Sovereign Master of the world, Thou who, being all, possessest and delightest in all, didst Thou in that moment of Thy eternity cast a closer glance towards us, that we were thus bathed in such a magnificence of love? Or was it that Thou didst wish, in the humble instrument of this ephemeral and limited being, to taste more strongly and fully, with more intensity and precision, Thy own delight of being and self-manifestation? Suddenly all was lit with the inexpressible beauty of Thy Truth, and in the mirror of the individual consciousness Thou didst reflect all the infinitely varied modes of self-expression of Thy
being of Love. Pain and enjoyment united and fused in an ecstasy which seemed as if it must consume the whole being in its blaze. Oh, how well it understood Thee, this portion of Thyself that has crystallised into what I call my being, how powerfully it loved Thee in those unforgettable moments! All barriers of thought and sensation had vanished, consumed by the ardour of Thy divine fire, and indeed it was Thou who at that moment didst delight in Thy eternal and infinite presence in all things. Thou wast all actions and all resistances, all sensations and all thoughts, the one who loves and the one who is loved, that which gives itself and that which receives, in an inexhaustible and ever-moving harmony.

I listened to the song of the waves, and it told me of such great marvels....

March or April 1915

To know how to renounce the satisfaction of the present moment for the sake of realising one’s ideal is the great art of those who want to make their transient, total existence yield its utmost.

There are innumerable categories of “successful” people; these categories are determined by the greater or lesser breadth, nobility, complexity, purity and luminosity of their ideal. One may “succeed” as a rag-picker or “succeed” as master of the world or even as a perfect ascetic; in all three cases, although on very different levels, it is one’s more or less integral and extensive self-mastery which makes the “success” possible.

On the other hand, there is only one way of being a “failure”; and that happens to the greatest, to the most sovereign intelligence, as well as to the smallest, the most limited, to all those who are unable to subordinate the sensation of the present moment to the ideal they wish to achieve, but without having the strength to take up the path — identical for all in nature if not in extent and complexity — that leads to this achievement.

Between the extreme of an individual who has fully and
perfectly realised all he had conceived and that of one who has been incapable of realising anything at all, there is, of course, an almost unlimited range of intermediate cases; this range is remarkably complex, because not only is there a difference in the degree of realisation of the ideal, but there is also a difference between the varied qualities of the ideal itself. There are ambitions which pursue mere personal interests, material, sentimental or intellectual, others which have more general, more collective or higher aims, and yet others which are superhuman, so to say, and strive to scale the peaks that open on the splendours of eternal Truth, eternal Consciousness and eternal Peace. It is easy to understand that the power of one’s effort and renunciation must be commensurate with the breadth and height of the goal one has chosen.

At any level, from the most modest to the most transcendent, one rarely finds a perfect balance between the sum of self-control, the power of sacrifice available to the individual who has chosen a goal, and the sum of renunciations of every kind and nature which the goal requires.

When the constitution of an individual permits this perfect balance, then his earthly existence yields its utmost possible result.

23 April 1915

At times Thou kindlest in the being an ardent brasier; at such moments, all seems possible to it — the most extreme and the most supreme realisations as well as the most obscure and modest.

When there is not this ardent brasier, the being is like a heap of ashes; and Thou lightest rarely the brasier. Is it to spare this frail instrument?

The mind puts questions; but the integral being is satisfied; it asks for nothing else than what Thou willest.

But it knows itself to be poor and miserable, naked and worthless without Thy active Presence.
Prayers and Meditations

It is Thy Presence that always it calls and for that it waits.

9 December 1916

Silence comes and the flame of aspiration is lit, the body is suffused with warmth, and in this warmth there is a blissful impulse towards transformation; the song of divine harmony is heard, calm and smiling: it is a sweet symphony, almost imperceptible and yet full of power. Then silence returns, deeper and vaster, yes, vast unto infinity, and the being exists beyond all bounds of time or space.

O my sweet Lord, my beloved God, all my being cries out to Thee in an irresistible surge: “I love Thee! I love Thee! I love Thee!”... with a love no words can ever express. The whole being is aflame, fused in this intensity. Only my heart, so often disappointed, so cruelly deceived, murmurs timidly: “Wilt Thou not do as men have done? Wilt Thou not repulse this love as unworthy of Thee, or too heavy to bear?” O doubting heart! Dost thou not see that it is the adored One Himself who loves in thee and feeds this fire that will never die? No more timidity, no more vain reserve... the past fades away like a dream. All that remains is a marvellous Present made of sublime Eternity.... O my beloved God, Thou hast taken me into Thy arms that are so strong and so gentle, and nothing exists but Thy divine Ecstasy.

Art is the human language of the nervous plane, intended to express and communicate the Divine, who in the domain of sensation manifests as beauty.

The purpose of art is therefore to give those for whom it is meant a freer and more perfect communion with the Supreme
Reality. The first contact with this Supreme Reality expresses itself in our consciousness by a flowering of the being in a plenitude of vast and peaceful delight. Each time that art can give the spectator this contact with the infinite, however fleetingly, it fulfils its aim; it has shown itself worthy of its mission. Thus no art which has for many centuries moved and delighted a people can be dismissed, since it has at least partially fulfilled its mission — to be the powerful and more or less perfect utterance of that which is to be expressed.

What makes it difficult for the sensibility of a nation to enjoy the delight that another nation finds in one art or another is the habitual limitation of the nervous being which, even more than the mental being, is naturally exclusive in its ability to perceive the Divine and which, when it has entered into relation with Him through certain forms, feels an almost irresistible reluctance to recognise Him through other forms of sensation.

What is this “I” that speaks from time to time, perceiving its limitation in the very midst of the consciousness of the infinite? It is the point of concentration where the Will which is beyond becomes individually conscious so that it can manifest through the terrestrial instrument; in short, it is the individualised intermediary between the instrument and the thought of the worker, a kind of more or less skilled hand. The “I” knows itself to be completely independent of the present mode of manifestation — form, body, surroundings, education, sensory experiences; it is a constituent element of the All, an infinitesimal part of the universe; its duration as an “I” is identical to the duration of the universe and dependent on it. It knows that only That which is not an “I” can be free from this dependence, can be eternally. The “I” knows that it is perfectly surrendered to That which it cannot think, that it is moved by That, and therefore it does not say, “I want”, but “I have to want” or “I am made to
want”. And, surrendered to its Eternal Master, the Master of his temporary instrument, knowing that it will disappear at the same time as the work for which it was created, it accomplishes it joyfully, without impatience for its completion, nor any desire for its prolongation.